

# News

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**BLS 05-65**  
**FOR RELEASE:**  
**Thursday, October 6, 2005**

## **AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES IN NEVADA: FOURTH QUARTER 2004** **Nevada ranks 7th in wage growth nationwide**

In the fourth quarter of 2004, the average weekly wage in Nevada rose 6.5 percent over the year to \$768, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden commented that the State's wage level trailed the national average of \$812, though its over-the-year increase in wages was faster than the 5.7 percent gain for the nation.

Nevada has two large counties with 75,000 or more jobs, Clark and Washoe. In the fourth quarter of 2004, wages in Clark County rose 7.7 percent over the year to \$770 and in Washoe County, a 3.9 percent gain brought the wage level to \$769 per week. As for the State, the average weekly wage levels for Nevada's two large counties were below the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2004. Washoe County also had below-average wage growth over the year, but Clark County did not. (See Table 1.)

### **Over-the-year wage changes**

The average weekly wage in Nevada grew 6.5 percent from the fourth quarter of 2003 to the fourth quarter of 2004, the 7th highest wage increase among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. (Florida, Iowa, and New Hampshire also had a 6.5 percent wage gain and, as a result, the same ranking.) Minnesota led the U.S. in over-the-year wage growth at 7.5 percent. Delaware and Virginia were next in line with increases of 7.0 and 6.9 percent, respectively. These states were followed by California (6.7 percent), Hawaii (6.6 percent), and Idaho (6.6 percent). Vermont reported the slowest increase in wages in the nation at 2.3 percent; no state reported a decline. (See Table 2.)

Clark County's 7.7 percent wage gain was well above the national average in the fourth quarter of 2004, ranking 38<sup>th</sup> highest among the nation's 317 large counties. On the other hand, Washoe County's 3.9 percent wage increase ranked 252<sup>nd</sup>, among the bottom quarter nationwide. In the U.S., Williamson County, Texas, with a wage gain of 17.8 percent, led the nation, followed by the counties of Rock Island, Ill. (14.8 percent), Ventura, Calif. (12.6 percent), Henrico, Va. (12.5 percent), and St. Louis, Minn. (11.0 percent). At the lower end of the rankings were five counties that experienced wage

growth of 1.0 percent or less: Kalamazoo, Mich.; Richmond, N.Y.; Macomb, Mich.; Genesee, Mich.; and Ingham, Michigan. No large county experienced a decline in its average weekly wage.

## **Wage levels**

The average weekly wage in Nevada was \$768, more than 5 percent below the national average. This placed Nevada 20th in the rankings among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Nevada's weekly wage exceeded levels in neighboring Idaho (\$618, 47<sup>th</sup>), Utah (\$664, 37<sup>th</sup>), Oregon (\$719, 27<sup>th</sup>), and Arizona (\$752, 23<sup>rd</sup>), but was well below the wage in California (\$928, 6<sup>th</sup>). (See Table 2.)

Nationwide, average wage levels were greater than \$1,000 per week for the top five in the rankings: District of Columbia (\$1,305), Connecticut (\$1,056), New York (\$1,016), Massachusetts (\$1,007), and New Jersey (\$1,001). Weekly wages in this group were more than 20 percent above the national average. At the other end of the scale, four states reported wages below \$600 per week—or less than 75 percent of the national average: Montana (\$572), South Dakota (\$581), Mississippi (\$586), and North Dakota (\$599).

The average weekly wage levels of the two large counties in Nevada, \$770 in Clark and \$769 in Washoe, were below the national average in the fourth quarter of 2004, ranking 148 and 150, respectively, among the nation's 317 large counties. Nationwide, New York County, N.Y., recorded the highest average weekly wage at \$1,608. In fact, three of the top ten counties with the highest wages were in the New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y.; Fairfield, Conn.; and Somerset, N.J.), while three others were located in or around the San Francisco area (Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco, all in California), with three more were located around the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area (Washington, D.C.; Arlington, Va.; and Fairfax, Va.). Suffolk County, Mass., part of the Boston metropolitan area, rounded out the top ten. At the other end of the wage scale, the lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron, Texas (\$500), followed by Hidalgo, Texas (\$504), and Webb, Texas (\$540).

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program. The data are derived from reports submitted by employers subject to Unemployment Insurance (UI) laws. The 8.5 million employer reports cover 131.6 million full-time and part-time jobs. The average weekly wage is computed by dividing the total quarterly payroll of employees covered by UI programs by the average monthly number of these employees. This number then is divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. We note that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or States for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas, counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Technical Note below) and will not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

## **Additional statistics and other information**

An annual bulletin, *Employment and Wages*, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The bulletin is now available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn03.htm>. Also, the quarterly press release, County Employment and

Wages, presents employment and wage data for the largest counties in the U.S. and is available at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>.

QCEW-based news releases issued by other regional offices have been placed at one convenient BLS Web site location, see <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewregional.htm>.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

For personal assistance or further information on the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the Western Region Information Office at 415-975-4350 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Pacific Time.

This release is available in text and PDF format on the San Francisco BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/ro9/>. Users may also obtain the release from the Bureau's fax-on-demand service in San Francisco by dialing 415-975-4567 and requesting document number 9675.

#### TECHNICAL NOTE

QCEW data are the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. For this reason, county and industry data are not designed to be used as a time series. The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. The potential differences result from several causes. Differences between BLS and State published data may be due to the continuing receipt, review, and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

**Table 1. Covered<sup>1</sup> employment and wages in the United States and two largest counties in Nevada, fourth quarter 2004<sup>2</sup>**

	Employment December 2004 (thousands)	Average Weekly Wage <sup>3</sup>			
		Average Weekly Wage	National ranking by level <sup>4</sup>	Percent change, fourth quarter 2003-04 <sup>5</sup>	National ranking by percent change <sup>4</sup>
United States <sup>6</sup> .....	131,560.7	\$812		5.7	
Nevada.....	1,186.1	768	20	6.5	7
Clark, NV.....	839.0	770	148	7.7	38
Washoe, NV.....	211.1	769	150	3.9	251

<sup>1</sup> Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

<sup>2</sup> Data are preliminary.

<sup>3</sup> Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

<sup>4</sup> Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

<sup>5</sup> Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for any noneconomic county reclassifications.

<sup>6</sup> Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

**Table 2. Covered<sup>1</sup> employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2004<sup>2</sup>**

	Employment December 2004 (thousands)	Average Weekly Wage <sup>3</sup>			
		Average Weekly Wage	National ranking by level <sup>4</sup>	Percent change, fourth quarter 2003- 04	National ranking by percent change <sup>4</sup>
United States <sup>5</sup> .....	131,560.7	\$812	-	5.7	-
Alabama.....	1,882.0	695	32	5.8	21
Alaska.....	288.4	780	18	4.4	43
Arizona.....	2,459.0	752	23	5.9	17
Arkansas.....	1,149.1	623	45	6.0	14
California.....	15,163.8	928	6	6.7	4
Colorado.....	2,181.7	830	14	5.9	17
Connecticut.....	1,663.8	1,056	2	6.3	12
Delaware.....	418.0	883	7	7.0	2
District of Columbia.....	659.6	1,305	1	5.5	28
Florida.....	7,729.7	736	24	6.5	7
Georgia.....	3,916.5	772	19	5.0	34
Hawaii.....	603.0	723	26	6.6	5
Idaho.....	597.8	618	47	6.6	5
Illinois.....	5,773.7	877	9	6.0	14
Indiana.....	2,883.9	706	31	4.6	42
Iowa.....	1,441.9	667	36	6.5	7
Kansas.....	1,317.5	668	35	5.9	17
Kentucky.....	1,761.9	679	33	5.3	31
Louisiana.....	1,890.3	658	39	4.9	38
Maine.....	600.9	661	38	4.8	40
Maryland.....	2,506.0	879	8	5.8	21
Massachusetts.....	3,169.2	1,007	4	5.6	26
Michigan.....	4,348.5	835	12	3.3	50
Minnesota.....	2,635.3	835	12	7.5	1
Mississippi.....	1,116.7	586	49	4.8	40
Missouri.....	2,670.4	709	30	4.9	38
Montana.....	409.3	572	51	4.2	44
Nebraska.....	891.8	648	41	5.7	24
Nevada.....	1,186.1	768	20	6.5	7
New Hampshire.....	624.0	840	11	6.5	7
New Jersey.....	3,964.7	1,001	5	5.7	24
New Mexico.....	773.2	645	42	5.0	34
New York.....	8,466.9	1,016	3	5.8	21
North Carolina.....	3,844.9	714	29	5.2	32
North Dakota.....	326.2	599	48	6.4	11
Ohio.....	5,350.3	754	22	5.9	17
Oklahoma.....	1,458.8	627	44	5.0	34
Oregon.....	1,623.5	719	27	3.5	48
Pennsylvania.....	5,573.2	796	16	6.0	14
Rhode Island.....	482.6	765	21	3.5	48
South Carolina.....	1,811.0	655	40	5.0	34
South Dakota.....	371.2	581	50	3.9	47
Tennessee.....	2,704.3	728	25	5.5	28
Texas.....	9,479.9	800	15	6.1	13
Utah.....	1,100.6	664	37	5.2	32
Vermont.....	304.7	676	34	2.3	51
Virginia.....	3,568.2	841	10	6.9	3
Washington.....	2,718.0	790	17	4.1	45
West Virginia.....	695.4	620	46	5.6	26
Wisconsin.....	2,755.2	719	27	5.4	30
Wyoming.....	247.9	641	43	4.1	45

<sup>1</sup> Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

<sup>2</sup> Data are preliminary.

<sup>3</sup> Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

<sup>4</sup> Ranking does not include Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

<sup>5</sup> Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.